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Grosvenor - The Believer Victorious. 1835



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THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
(CLASS OF 1882)
OF NEW YORK

1918

Ms. A

GROSVENOR'S SERMON,

ON THE DEATH OF

Rev. SAMUEL JUDSON. *25*

1833

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THE BELIEVER VICTORIOUS.

A

15

Sermon,

OCCASIONED BY THE

DEATH OF THE REV. SAMUEL JUDSON,

LATE PASTOR OF THE FIRST ECCLESIASTICAL SOCIETY
IN UXBRIDGE, MASS.

AND PREACHED IN THE

MEETING-HOUSE OF THAT SOCIETY,

ON

NOV. 18, THE SABBATH AFTER HIS INTERMENT.

BY DAVID A. GROSVENOR,

Pastor of the Evangelical Congregational Society in Uxbridge.

Precious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of his saints.—Ps. cxvi. 15.

Published by request of the Church.

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FROM
THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDALL
1918

On account of the illness of the author, and of the absence of Mrs. Judson from the Sanctuary, on the day of the delivery of the following discourse, parts of it were not spoken. The two first inferences and the address to the consort of the deceased, were wholly omitted.

D. A. G.

SERMON.

2 TIMOTHY iv. 6, 7, 8.

"FOR I AM NOW READY TO BE OFFERED, AND THE TIME OF MY DEPARTURE IS AT HAND. I HAVE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT; I HAVE FINISHED MY COURSE; I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH: HENCEFORTH THERE IS LAID UP FOR ME A CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHICH THE LORD, THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE, SHALL GIVE ME AT THAT DAY.

In consenting to address you, respected hearers, on the removal of your late and aged pastor, I have yielded to the particular request of the deceased. With feelings of no ordinary kind, I approach the duties of this hour. The theme of our meditations revives the tenderest recollections. How lately we heard his voice of entreaty and exhortation. Its tones have scarcely ceased to vibrate on our ears. Four weeks ago this day, the venerable man stood before you, and uttered his farewell address, with the full conviction, that it was his last public message. You well remember, how earnestly, he then entreated you to accept the Gospel, and live for a better world.

In compliance with his wishes, that something should be said, by which the living might be profited, and the bereaved family, especially, consoled, I stand before you. In uttering a few suggestions, on the present occasion, I am sustained by the thought, that the event which convenes us, awakes similar desires, of mutual improvement, in all our hearts.

The tenderness and solemnity, with which you gathered around the relics of the deceased—the expressions of sympathy and sorrow, on the face of this community, speak a language more impressive than words. They seem to say, that he who was the faithful pastor—the affectionate husband—the tender father—the valuable citizen and neighbor—and the friend of the friendless, lives no more below. He rests from his earthly toils, by the or-

dinance of Him, who hath appointed the bounds we cannot pass.

We are not assembled, on the present occasion, to deplore the untimely fate of youth, in its bloom, nor yet, of manhood, in its prime. We are here, to meditate on the removal of one, who was far advanced toward the goal of human life, and ready to be offered. His departure was not sudden, either to himself, or to us. Death did not come to hurry away the youthful champion, just girding on the armor for the warfare; but to release the faithful servant, who had long stood at the post of duty, and was waiting. Like Paul, he *could*, and *did* say, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course.

The short and energetic description, which the Apostle Paul gives us of himself, in anticipation of his speedy departure, is such as might be expected from the tenor of his life. Selected from the feet of Gamaliel; and separated to the Apostleship, for the purpose of putting the Gentiles in possession of the Gospel, he magnified his office. Endowed with superior abilities, both natural and acquired; and versed in the religion of his own nation, Saul of Tarsus was, unquestionably, the fittest man of his age, for such an enterprise. When converted to Christ, his love, zeal, and humility, were equal to his talents. In comparison with his illustrious associates, he was far their superior. He was "in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft." Having spent a laborious and successful life, in the service of his Lord, and committed the Gospel, in trust to Timothy, his young companion, he writes him, giving an account of himself, when about to depart, and receive his crown. "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day."

There is, in this summary, an elevation of soul—a moral sublimity, that casts into the shade, the heroism of warlike deeds. It is the exultation of a Christian victor, the chiefest of Apostles, in full assurance of conquest, over the King of Terrors. He stood surveying his past life, which rose upon his recollections, like the varied scenes of a battle-field, where victory had been sharply contested, and won. Before him, was a crown of righteousness, and an eternal weight of glory. For this, he was ready to be offered, and longed to depart. He was assured of the crown,

which the righteous Judge would give him ; and not to him only, but to all who love his appearing.

Two leading thoughts, obviously, suggest themselves for our consideration :—

I. THE BELIEVER'S CONFLICT AND VICTORY.—And,

II. HIS REWARD.

I. The believer's conflict and victory.

The true believer understandingly receives, loves, and practises the doctrines and duties taught by our Lord. In becoming a cordial friend of Christ, an individual comes under the influence of principles, that are eminently practical. They are apprehended by faith. The first act of obedience to God, is an intelligent surrender, of one's self, to his pleasure. The subject transfers his affections, from things below to those above. Old things pass away, and all things, in his views and feelings, become new. He has new views of God, of Christ, of sin, and its desert. He has new and enlarged views of his relations to the present life and the next. The will of God becomes, when known, the commanding rule of his life, and duty a luxury. The higher principles of the religion of Christ, require the subordination of those inferior propensities of our nature, and principles of self-control, which, before conversion, govern the life. Hence arises the conflict ; and here, with *himself*, the warfare of the Christian believer begins. Nor is it a conflict without effort. An enemy is to be met, and a victory won. *That* enemy is a heart of unbelief, strong in its love of the world—cherished by the pride of life, and awed by the frowns of the unbelieving among men. How many there are, who approach this scene of conflict, and retire from it "*sorrowful*." The youthful disciple, who girds on the armor of this spiritual warfare, is often but little acquainted with the number and strength of his foes. He wrestles with flesh and blood, and often exclaims,—“ Oh, wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death.” He is never victorious without *foreign aid*. His leader, the Captain of Salvation, has declared,—“ Without me ye can do nothing.” He goes to the conflict alone, and is vanquished. He is humbled to a sense of his weakness—accepts of proffered aid—renews the struggle, and overcomes. The advantage gained must be secured, by continuous effort, to the last. And after all, the believer triumphs entirely by faith in the instructions, skill, and merits of another.

Again, survey the strife of the Christian in another sphere. For he has foes *without*, as well as *within*. Suppose the pride

and unbelief of his own heart subdued to the love, meekness, patience, and faith of the Gospel—that he himself is wholly brought under the influence of Christian principles. He meets with others, who *are*, as he *was*, unreconciled to God, and at variance with the principles that control his life. The reign of Christ on the earth is a reign of truth and righteousness, as well as of peace. Supreme love to God, and impartial love to men, are the two branches of that great law of love, by which the Prince of Peace designs to sway his sceptre over the human heart. Men, to be happy, must become holy—benevolent. But who does not see, that the law—“*Love thy neighbor as thyself*,” strikes at the root of selfishness, and opposes the bias of the natural heart. It is folly to desire, and hopeless to expect, that the world is to be converted to love for God and man, without struggles of mind with mind. The waters of life, poured into the fountains of selfishness—of sin, will cause them to ebb and flow, before they will send forth pure streams. The believer, by adopting, as the rule of his life, the principles of the kingdom of Christ, will meet a conflict with unsanctified minds; but then it is to borne, in the exercise of that love that “hopeth all things, endureth all things.” It were well, moreover, for the Christian, if he found in his own heart, and in the hearts of his fellow men, the only foes with which he must contend. But it is not so. We wrestle, saith the sacred penman, not against flesh and blood, (that is exclusively) but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. There is something here meant, more than the conflict of mind with itself—something more than most men are forward to believe comes from their fellow men.

The Bible does not gratify our utmost curiosity respecting every order of intelligences that exist in the universe. It reveals, however, so much as this, that man is the lowest order of the intelligent creation—that there are, high above us, in intellectual rank,—spiritual beings, both good and bad. The one class of whom favor, and the other oppose, the principles of eternal truth and righteousness. There is a kingdom of light, and an empire of darkness, with its heads and rulers. They exist in high places, and are possessed of superior advantages for the success of their designs. They are the rulers of the darkness of this world, and had an agency in its temptation and fall. Their dominion has not ceased on the earth, as many events plainly declare. Degenerated and lost themselves, they seek the ruin of virtuous be-

ings. Their agency extends over the children of men with fearful odds. Against such the Christian must contend. Would he conquer, he must come to a stand, on the principles of the Gospel, and take to himself the "whole armor of God,"—"the shield of faith,"—"the helmet of salvation," "and the sword of the Spirit." He will then need to watch, and pray, and contend, with ardor and perseverance, if he would fight the good fight, and take the crown. And after all, the issue of the conflict will turn on the point, *whether he keeps the faith*. If he abides steadfast in Christian doctrine and duty, victory will side in his favor. If he keeps the faith, the faith will keep him, and give him the victory.

And further, the world we inhabit is a world of probation—a state of trial. And there are storms, that wake on life's troubled ocean, and assail the Christian from another quarter. He is a man of natural affection as strong—of sensibilities, it may be, as delicate and refined—of attachments as warm—of attainments as rare, as those of other men. He is associated with those, in whom he takes sweet delight. He has been enlightened by their counsels—refreshed by their prayers—and guided by their example. He has long shared their society, and hoped for its continuance. But the hour of separation is at hand. Now, though the Christian may see much to admire, in the kind hand, that conceals the future from his view, and gradually opens before him the rugged path of life, yet he has struggles. There is a conflict of Christian principle, with natural affection and social endearment. I saw a mother in the watches of the lonely night, by the couch of her first-born. Days of sorrow and nights of anguish had there been consumed, in painful suspense. There she sat, and as she gazed upon the pallid cheek and dim eye of her loved one, made her prayer, in language that found no words to give it utterance. Suddenly a change came over the scene. The cold hand of death chilled the opening flower, and blasted all her cherished hopes. It was an hour of conflict; yes, and of victory too: for there were higher and tried hopes, that sprang from trust in God, to sustain her. And there were tears without repinings, and joys mingling in the cup of sorrow. Faith saw, in the ages to come, that that mortal would put on immortality,

"And bloom to fade no more."

The sainted mother believes, and relies, with cheerful serenity, upon the words and grace of 'him who was dead and is alive

again, and liveth forevermore.' The flower, that bloomed at her side, is blasted, but her eye shall gaze upon it again in a sweeter clime.

Look now, and see how death can change the scene. His victim is the tender husband—the solicitous father—the able counselor—the guide of the young—in a word—the head of a family. Who can fill his place? Alas! it is not expected. But where shall the mourners turn to dry their tears? To “earthly helpers?” Their sympathies and prayers are truly a cordial—the best that fellow pilgrims give. We value them much. But think again, (and at such times the mind will think,) they, to whom we turn for succor, are like those that have fled, and may be on the eve of their own departure, ready to pierce the heart with *sorrow upon sorrow*.* Can these things be, and there exist no conflict? It is not to be premised, without doing violence to human nature. But without the faith of the Christian, the mourner must lean upon a broken reed. A sort of resignation there may be—an assent to what we *would*, but *cannot* alter; but this is far, very far from the victory of the child of God. In *that very hour* he renews his strength. The promise is his. “They shall mount up with wings, as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.”

But let us extend our observation a little. The man of God sustains relations to others, beyond the circle of his kindred. He is a citizen of another and better country, and only a pilgrim and sojourner here. He is associated with fellow heirs of glory, with whose interests his own are identified; and whose friendship he has bespoken for eternity. In their life, his own seems bound up. Whether called to part with *them*, or they with *him*, the ties of Christian intercourse must be sundered, for a season at least. And what a breach is often made, by a single stroke, in the circle of the Christian's private joys. Nor is it any solace to him, to know that others suffer from the same stroke. The loss seems irreparable, and the thought of it is painful, and would be doubly so, only, as it is alleviated by the consideration, that the Saviour takes care of his church above, first. Men of valuable

* The bereaved family of the Rev. Mr. Judson had scarcely passed through his funeral solemnities, before they were called to a second trial, as severe as it was unexpected. *Mary Thompson*, the devoted wife of *Hurbert*, eldest son of the late Rev. Mr. Judson, died on the Sabbath after the delivery of this discourse. On the morning of that day, she was moving in the domestic circle, apparently in usual health, and with the bloom of youth upon her countenance. At eventide, Death had executed his trust, and extended the circle of mourners.

lives, die in the midst of their usefulness; and clouds and darkness gather around the throne on high. They may soon pass away, and the light of a mild and happy day succeed. But then, it requires faith to make it reality, while the tempest lowers. When the earth is filled with violence—when the overflowing scourge sweeps the land—when pestilence, famine, and death, stalk on every side, consigning to the grave, the great and the good, and changing the face of society:—and when the hearts of men are failing them for fear, then it requires faith in God, to utter the language of confidence,—“I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.”

But let us follow the believer to the scene of his *last* conflict. In common with all other men, he must die. There is no exception. The decree is universal—“Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” The Christian victor, having fought a good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith; has yet to meet the king of terrors, and make an offering of himself, to complete his triumph. All previous conflicts terminate in this.

Dying is a serious concern. No one can duly, otherwise consider it. And it needs special preparation, calmly to hear the instruction,—“Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live.” A multitude of thoughts crowd themselves upon a *dying man*. He is about to quit his present abode. There are friends to be left, and ties to be sundered, that bind him to earthly interests. There are inquiries too, that will start up, about those he leaves behind; such as, what will be their future condition?—what treatment will they receive from a cold and selfish world? The widow and the orphan—who will befriend them in the hour of need, and condole with them in affliction? What will be the circumstances of *their* departure? How long before we meet again? Shall we part more? Lives there death beyond the tomb? These, and other inquiries, every dying man will be liable to meet. And does he find no difficulty in solving *them*? no conflict—no room for faith, in things unseen and eternal?

And there, too, are schemes of happiness, and projected *plans* of usefulness to others, that must be left unaccomplished. Most men project plans, quite too extensive for this short life. They live to *propose*, but not to *execute*. The agency of others must carry them into operation. But who shall be found to execute, like him who planned.

But, grant all these things resigned without a struggle, the man has other themes of contemplation that awaken a deeper interest.

He is going to another world. But what kind of world is it? With whom is he there to mingle? Where will he next be found, after he quits his hold on things below? His eternal dwelling,—where is it to be? He calls upon unassisted reason, to solve his inquiries. Conjectures and probabilities are all that she can propose. They do not satisfy. He whispers in the ear of Death, to inform him whither he conducts. Death is speechless and inexorable. He invokes the grave, and hears in return only, the echo of his own interrogatives. He turns now to the sacred volume, and reads of him that came down from heaven—“I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” The curtain rises. The darkness and gloom of the grave flee away. Life and immortality break in upon his vision. He beholds a rising Saviour, and an opening heaven, and hears a voice distinctly saying, “Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth: yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.”

“What joy the blest assurance gives.”

How changed the prospects of man! In all the words of *that life*, the dying believer trusts; but not without a conflict with sin—with unbelief. The holy law of God is perceived to be undiminished in its claims, by the intelligent Christian. Its sanctions remain. The sinner, destroyed by his own transgressions, is weak and helpless, without the arm of Omnipotence to roll back the penalty, and thrust in help. On his own merits he cannot rely for pardon. The humble and intelligent Christian knows this, and that too, in perfect coincidence with every attribute of a benevolent and merciful God. The free, gratuitous forgiveness of sins, for Christ's sake, accords well with the broken spirit and contrite heart of the Christian. He has no desire to be justified by his own merits. On the contrary, he glories in the sense of dependence he must feel upon another. The blood of expiation is the ground of his hopes. In view of the necessity of his death, and his willingness to undertake for him, he welcomes a Savior. In faith, with humility, with admiration, with gratitude towards his great deliverer, he waves every other trust, and places, on this sure foundation of the Christian system, all his hopes. It is the rock of ages, elect, tried, precious; where thousands of our guilty race have ventured, and found peace. Thus, confiding in the strength of the great Redeemer, the good man

dies, and goes up to his home, at God's right hand. All before this is a scene of doubtful conflict.

"Life lies in embryo, never free,
Till nature yields her breath;
Till time becomes eternity,
And man is born in death."

Having spoken of the conflict and victory of the believer, I proceed,

II. To consider his reward.

If the Bible has not disclosed *all*, respecting a future state, that curiosity prompts, it has revealed much,—enough for all practical purposes. It has made known the substance of things hoped for—defined the terms of salvation; and furnished the appropriate motives to obedience. It bids us seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, with assurance that all things needful shall be added.

A world of intelligent beings, of various orders, superior in powers, and perfect in excellence, make up heaven. The *nature*, *degree*, and *duration* of its employments, we learn. Their nature is *holy*. In heaven, the glorified believer will much resemble God. He will be, in character, like his Maker: with a spirit pure and spotless,—a body celestial and glorious, resembling the body of Christ, when he ascended. "We shall be like Him," saith an Apostle, "for we shall see him as he is." "As for me," exclaims the meditating Psalmist, "I will behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." Ignorance, sin, and darkness, cloud the mental vision here, and intercept the light of God's countenance. But not so *there*. On the heights of Zion rests no cloud, nor mist. There, the Sun of Righteousness pours one effulgent, eternal day.

"Pure are the joys above the sky,
And all the region peace."

There, in one united and happy kingdom, of which Christ is the head, will be assembled all the holy. There will be those morning stars, that sang together at the birth of creation, and hung again, in rapture, over the plains of Bethlehem, on the advent of the Savior. There will be all the good, of all ages—all worlds—all systems:—the whole company of the believing children of men, gathered from out of every nation under heaven. Death shall have no more dominion over them. None will be able to annoy their blessedness. There the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. Faith will then be exchanged for sight, and the hope of heaven for its fruition.

The reward of the believer will be *inconceivably great in degree*. It will consist in a confirmed title *to*, and an actual entrance *upon*, all the privileges, immunities, and joys of heaven. Knowledge and love will there reign triumphant,—the love of complacency, and of beneficent action. Each holy inhabitant, conscious of personal excellence, will share the unshaken confidence of God, and of fellow heirs of glory. A society composed of the most amiable, enlightened, and virtuous individuals, on the earth, would be but a faint representation of that above. Yet how unspeakable the privilege, to spend an eternity with *such*. The privileges of the society of heaven will be greater far. The entire kingdom of God will forever unite their efforts with his, in securing the highest amount of blessedness of which their natures are capable. And it will be such an exhibition of God, and of the moral excellence of created mind, as mortal eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived. Then, and there, will be seen the perfections of God, in the developments of a moral government, worthy of its author. The fundamental principles of that government we have in the present life. We know something, too, of the employments of that world. The Apostle John, wrapt in holy vision, anticipated, a little, its glories. He gives us a fragment of a song, that stole, in sweet accents, upon his listening ear, from the choir of “ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands: saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb, that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.” This is the rich melody of angelic minds. And yet, sweeter notes were heard from lips that praised the Lamb below:—“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever.”

The reward of the believer will be *eternal*. “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

The steady and scriptural anticipation of such enobling bliss, is enough to diminish, if not annihilate, the fears of dying.

I have only to add, on this part of my subject, that the reward of the Christian will be *by grace*. Doubtless, one of the brightest exhibitions, that the universe is appointed to witness, will be the *unfolded work of Redemption*. Comparatively small and unimportant as may seem, at first view, the planet we inhabit, it

has pleased God, to make it a theatre of amazing grace. We essentially err, when we attempt to circumscribe the moral influence of events, by local boundaries. The death of Christ has materially affected the universe. It sustains an intimate relation to the whole moral kingdom of God. It has laid the foundation in the system of grace, for the pardon of sinners; and presented them, the appropriate motives to Reformation. It has changed, forever, the worship of Heaven—its songs and services; and furnished a theme of admiring contemplation to the universe. The redeemed, in glory, will forever trace with ineffable delight, those triumphs of grace, that have secured their crowns. They will continue to be pleased with the method, infinite wisdom took to render pardon consistent with the dispensation of mercy, humbling the pride of man, and exalting the grace of God. The Savior will then appear to be, what he is, *all and in all*. He will be satisfied with the glory he secures, and saints with their reward. As the eternal ages roll away, the kingdom of God will endure, rising higher, and casting a brighter effulgence of glory, over his acts of grace, and his power to bless. Every succeeding age, as it passes, will tell of holiness and happiness confirmed, and vastly augmented.

Such in nature, degree, and duration, is the reward, to which death introduces the believer. It is *ample, inconceivable, eternal*.

The subject, that we have been contemplating, suggests several considerations, by way of inference.

1. *It is a privilege to die.* The child of God would not live alway, in this life. There is a better. It has ever been considered, by the people of God, a privilege to exchange earth for Heaven. The apostles and primitive Christians did not regard death as an evil, but a blessing. They call it *sleep, rest, sleep in Jesus*. Paul estimated death gain; and desired to depart that he might be with Christ. Having 'fought the good fight, and kept the faith, he was ready to be offered.' Every Christian, in the exercise of faith, will also, consider it a privilege, when his work is done, to go home. The prospect of usefulness to others, may render it desirable for him to remain on the earth. And truly he does occupy a station, that an angel, in this respect, might envy. But so far as he himself is concerned, he would depart. The present life is a scene of conflicts—of trials—of faith—of hope and fear—of sin, sickness, pain, and sorrow; and at best, of imperfect love. Death and time are busily working.

their changes, and making the sojourners, in this probationary state, *feel that this is a changing world*. Inasmuch, as the next is superior to it, in its freedom from all these, it becomes an object of intense interest to the Christian to die. Death puts him in full possession of his birthright among the sons of God. He sighs for his home on high. There the unfettered spirit will cease to be checked, in its aspirations after God. It will mount up and burn with seraphic love. Allied to kindred spirits, superior in knowledge and excellence, and surrounded with objects, all of which are holy, the glorified believer will possess superior facilities, for advance in knowledge and bliss. And who, with due preparation, would not exult in the thought, that the time of his departure was at hand?

2. *It is the duty of the people of God to seek a triumphant death.*

By a triumphant death, I do not mean, that the very last hour of life must be one of exultation; but that the Christian, in the near and certain prospect of his departure, be able to rejoice, yea with *triumph*. It is the duty of the child of God to possess, and cherish *the assured hope* of future glory. Such hope springs *from*, and is necessarily connected *with*, a life of habitual obedience to all divine requirements. To die is a duty, which the believer has on his hands to perform. It is a voluntary yielding up of himself to the ordinance of God, that separates soul and body. It is not only a privilege, and a duty, for the Christian to die, but he is, as really and forcibly, obligated to die *triumphantly*, as he is to live *obediently*. The believer, who triumphs over death, honors God. "Precious in the eyes of the Lord, is the death of his saints." The grace of God is magnified in the death of such. Nothing more confirms the truth, and superiority of the Christian religion, than the consistent death of its disciples. Many a man, who has gloried in his fancied superiority over the fears of death, has shrunk away, with faint heartedness, at the approach of the king of terrors, while the pious, devoted follower of Jesus has been sustained, and sung the triumphant song, "O death where is thy sting, O grave where is thy victory."

Ye, who bear the Christian name, look well to the *closing scene*. It will probably be, what your life has been. If *that* has shone, with the light of a Christian example, you may reasonably expect, continuing faithful, that the glories of heaven will come down around your dying bed, and fill you with the fulness of God.

3. *How unspeakably valuable, to himself, in a dying hour, is the hope of the believer.*

Man's whole soul is stayed upon hope, in the midst of life. But in a dying hour, when the world retires—when human helpers fail—when the body languishes, and the spirits sink—when the immortal part is on the wing, about to leave her earthly tabernacle, and ascend to the bar of God:—tell me, what can then sustain the intelligent believer, but the hope that maketh not ashamed in life, and is triumph in death.

I know there is, sometimes less *apparent* than *real* difference, between the believer and the unbeliever, in their last hours. Disease of body may cloud the mental vision of a Christian, so as to deprive him of the evidence of his own good estate, as he goes to the final encounter. Erroneous views of the terms of the Divine favor—blunted susceptibilities and weakness may close the eye of the sinner, and he may appear calmly resigned. But to try the case fairly, let each come to the “dying strife,” with clear and equal knowledge of his own character and prospects, and mark the difference. The sinner, whose moral powers have not been rendered insensible, by disease, sometimes appears what he *is*, and like *what he is to be*. The world, with its fascinations of pleasure, and deceptive prospect of happiness, sometimes retires and leaves the immortal spirit to a sober estimate of realities. A view of his past life crowds upon the mind of the transgressor. He must think, and thinking, feel his lost condition. Faith always leans to the side of interest, and every thing in the case, would lead the dying sinner, to put the most favorable construction upon his past life. But conscience, whose voice has been hushed, in the giddy career of worldliness, now rises in her majesty, and asserts her rights. She insists on being heard. Strange fears of a coming retribution, steal over the guilty spirit, at the thought of abused love and merited displeasure. There is no room for doubt. The self-condemned sinner cannot escape the abiding conviction that he is lost forever. He owns his guilt and supplicates mercy, and mercy surely he needs for his guilty spirit.

I know there is not always so much yielding up to the force of truth, as this, even where there is a clear view of things eternal. I know there is a natural bracing up of the soul against unavoidable destiny. A kind of submission, too, there may be,—a bowing down of one's self to the appointed ordinance of God, with which a man may die.—I know there is a reckless.

madness, that rushes to the judgment, without thought, and an apathy—an insensibility to divine things, the result of voluntary ignorance of all that prepares for dying.

In these different states, persons *may* and often *do* die ; and it is called peace, quiet, calmness in the trying hour. But there is too much reason to fear, that it is the precursor of the storm. It is far from being the settled peace of the renovated mind, that has cultivated an intimacy with the anticipated scenes of a dying hour. Go visit the believer and the unbeliever, on their death-bed, and mark the superiority of the child of God. Oh I have seen the Christian then, knowing what he did, gather up his hopes, and place them on the rock of ages, and smile at the rising billows and lowering tempest, because they had no power to destroy. To the summons to depart, he answered : “ I am ready.” And then added : “ I have fought a good fight ; I have finished my course ; I have kept the faith : henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me at that day.”

I have been led to the preceding observations, by the peaceful, and I think I may add, triumphant exit, of the venerable man, who has so recently fled and left us in this vale of tears.

I am sacredly forbidden, by his dying injunction, to say much of him. A brief allusion to a few particulars, will not be deemed out of place.

Mr. Judson was born of pious and respectable parents, in the town of Woodbury, Conn. in the year 1767. He was graduated, at Yale College, in the 1790, and settled over this people in the ministry, in the year 1792. His history and character, from the period of his settlement in this place, are too well known, to this community, to require remark.

You are all acquainted with those amiable traits of character, which he possessed, and which secured him so large a share of esteem in the domestic circle, and in the pastoral relation. Mr. Judson was especially endeared to the members of his own family. He possessed a kind disposition and a benevolent heart. They eminently qualified him, for those assiduous attentions, which he showed, in sickness and in health. Although possessed of uninterrupted health himself, till the last year of his life, he was ever forward to sympathize with others. He ministered to their wants, as one experimentally taught. His value, in the bosom of his own family, can be duly estimated, by those only, who were privileged to share his devotedness to their interests.

His unceasing solicitude for their welfare, has embalmed his memory in their hearts, as a most devoted husband and father.

It was forty years the 18th of last month, since the beloved man was ordained over this church and people. The peace and tranquillity which the church and society enjoyed, under his ministrations, and the degree of esteem, in which he was held among you, evince his faithfulness, as a shepherd and bishop of souls. With his manner of life and walk, you are familiar. You know his deep and continued solicitude for this dear flock, over which he was set. Impressed with the reality of the great truths of revelation, it was his unceasing concern, that those, to whom he ministered, 'might feel them too.' He may be strictly said, I apprehend, to have sought, "not *yours* but *you*."

Next to his own household and the flock, over which he was constituted pastor, the deceased was strongly attached to the cause of benevolence. To the various, important branches of benevolent effort, that exist in the country, he contributed liberally, without predilection for any one in particular. The cause of learning and education received his decided support. He loved the cause of missions, and was forward to sympathize with such as had literally left all for the perishing heathen. Mr. Judson, for some time previous to his death, was an honorable member, of the Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and also of the Board of the American Education Society.

The disease, which carried him, from perfect health to the grave, commenced about a year since, but did not show itself in its distinctive character, until much later. Its progress, during its last stages, was regular and rapid. While it undermined and prostrated his vigorous constitution, it did not impair the intellectual faculties, nor deprive him of the consolations of religion. On the contrary, his faith and hope seemed to be invigorated with the decay of health. Some weeks previous to his decease, he resigned all hope of returning health, and commenced a more particular preparation for his departure. And with what composure he did it; those most intimate with him can best testify.

A few days before his death, when he had already entered upon the last week of his life, he said to a friend: "Though I feel the body sinking, the soul is sustained."

'God is my supporter and my hope
My help forever near.'

"In Christ, is an infinite fulness. I trust he is my portion, and I

want no other. He is the rock of ages. On him, is my hope founded. 'Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, whose hope the Lord is, when flesh and heart shall fail, he shall be the strength of my hope and my portion forever.'"

Mr. Judson was familiar with the Scriptures. They contained his themes of contemplation in sickness and health. They were peculiarly refreshing to him as he drew near the grave.

To a friend in conversation he observed: "Of the truth and importance of the doctrines, I have preached in my life, I am more than ever convinced. They can sustain under the most trying circumstances. God's government is holy, just and wise."

He spoke frequently, and with pleasure, of the change that had taken place, since the commencement of his ministry, in the exhibition of Calvinistic doctrines, as suited to disarm the infidel and objector of their weapons of attack.

The Saviour was remarkably precious in the estimation of our departed friend. To a member of the church he said: "Christ is all and in all: here is my rest. He has finished the work of Redemption—made atonement for transgression, and sends down his Spirit to carry on the work of grace." In reply to an assurance of the prayers and affection of the church he said: "I feel a strong attachment to all the disciples of Christ. Love is the grand principle of the Gospel—good will to all beings, and complacency in God and Christians. It is this that unites the hearts of all good men, on the earth, and will unite them, forever, in Heaven. And 'now I have finished my course.' I have done with the world; Christ is my foundation and head. My joy,—my confidence—my hope. I find in him all that I need, as a poor, perishing sinner."

On mentioning to him, the evening previous to his death, that we thought he had but little time to remain with us, he cheerfully replied; "*Very little*;" and that he would soon be with Paul and Peter, of whom we had just been conversing, he said: "*Very soon I shall*," and then repeated a hymn commencing,

"What sinners value I resign."

I then said to him, I regretted that he could bear no better report to his Lord and Master, of us who were likely to remain,—to which he replied: "Trust in the Lord, trust in the Lord and you have nothing to fear."* When about to unite in prayer for the

* It may be observed in this connection, that Mr. Judson was dismissed, at his own request, from his pastoral relation, in the month of March, 1832. A short time previous

last time, in which he intelligently joined with others, he was asked, as usual, if he had any particular petition to urge. After a moment's pause, leaving himself entirely out of view, he replied : " Pray that my death may be sanctified to yourselves—to the church and to ——," naming a particular friend for whom he had felt a deep solicitude.

Early the next morning, after a restless night, it was evident that an unseen hand was conducting him down the dark valley. From that time, he gradually and peacefully sunk away to rest, until a quarter before 12 o'clock, on the morning of the Sabbath, when, he literally and we trust spiritually, fell asleep in Jesus, and ascended on high.

Throughout all his decline, there was a meekness of spirit, and a patience in suffering, that were truly amiable :—a calmness that was unruffled :—a steady contemplation of divine things, and a sustained spirit that spring only from God.

Thus has terminated the life and labors of one, in whom we all had an interest, and with whom, we must soon stand in the judgment. He has gone to the world of spirits, and his works do follow him. His record is on high, and his praise is in the churches. Farewell, shade of the blest.

" We ask no flowers to deck thy tomb,
In purer light, thy name shall bloom,
When every flower of earth is dead,
And all that bloom below are fled."

This subject allows me to address words of consolation to these mourning friends. To the bereaved consort of the deceased, it speaks in accents of tenderness.

My Dear Madam,

You have been deeply afflicted, and may be tempted in this hour of trial to exclaim : " All these things are against me." It is true, there is a monitory voice, in this providence, of no doubtful kind. God, in his holy providence, has come very near you. He has removed the staff on which you hoped to lean through life. Husband and friend he has put far from you, for a season. But what abundant cause have you for consolation ! The angel of mercy came before the messenger of death. If you had been before hand advised of all the circumstances in the case, you

to his dismission, the church formerly under his charge, had withdrawn from their connection with the first parish, and united with the newly formed Evangelical Congregational Society. It was a source of pleasure to the venerable pastor, which he repeatedly expressed, that he could leave the Church and Society in its present circumstances.

could scarcely have wished one of them altered. They seem, indeed to be ordered, in mercy to you, and in honor to divine grace. Surely, there is here abundant evidence that the Lord doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.

You are sacredly forbidden to mourn, as for those without hope. Are you ready to say : " Lord I am oppressed undertake for me." The word of strength and comfort is nigh. " Cast thy burden upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee." I seem to behold you meeting every wave of conflict, with the patience and words of one of old, " All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." If, at any time the promise appears distant, call to mind the example of him who has gone before you. Consider how he was sustained, and more than sustained, even to the last. Think of his faith and patience that endured unto the end. " And the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and bless you" and guide you to his rest.

And you, too, *My Younger Friends*, who mourn the loss of a father, have been called to drink the cup of sorrow. What words of condolence can I utter for your support ? What can I add to the instructions that have so often distilled from those lips, that are now cold in death. The counsels and prayers that have been the guide of your youth, and the solace of riper years, are ended. Perhaps I should say, they are treasured up in lively remembrance, to be revived by a thousand incidents, as you hasten to the world of spirits. Be instructed by this providence, into an experimental acquaintance with the sentiment, that the deepest afflictions are, often, the choicest blessings in disguise. They only bear another name and bless in another form. The loss you deplore will be gain, if it lead you to cultivate the spirit, and imitate the Christian virtues of the deceased.

You are called upon, in a very affecting manner, to unite your sympathies with a surviving parent, for mutual comfort—spiritual improvement and support.

To this Church of Christ, of which the departed was so long and recently the pastor, the event we this day deplore, is attended with lessons of solemn instruction. The relation which he sustained to you, was akin to that which he bore to his own family. He was your constituted head—your example and instructor. Here you have assembled from year to year, weekly, to listen to the words of truth from his lips. Around this altar of God, you have sat with him, and broken the bread of life, and drank the cup of salvation, and anticipated the day when you should drink

it anew, in his kingdom above. Your shepherd has gone before you, and rendered up the account of his charge. He is now, we trust, reaping the fruit of his labors. We trust he has been permitted to say of some, yea, of many who fell asleep before him, 'Here Lord am I and the children *thou* hast given me.' His instructions—his example—his prayers—his decline and death—you *will* not—yea *cannot* forget. You will long remember the day of his exit. With what emotions, in the very hour of his removal, you joined, in publicly commending his departing spirit, to that Savior in whom he trusted: and then gathered around the table of your Lord below, and thought of him communing above.

We are called upon, beloved in Christ, by this deeply afflicting dispensation, to redeem the time—to awake and do with our might what remains to be done, for our time is short, and our work great.

Before I close this discourse, I must be allowed to address a few words, to those present, who were the companions, in age, of the deceased.

- *Aged and Venerable Friends.* One thing may be said in reference to you, which cannot, with certainty, be spoken of any *other* class in this community.—You *must* very soon follow your departed friend. The circumstances in which I address you, are striking. Are they not peculiar? Suffer me to interpret the message, that comes from yonder new-made grave. What is its import? Does it not speak in language more eloquent than the living utter, "*Be ye also ready.*" How many older and younger than yourselves, you have followed to the tomb. Parents, children, husbands, wives, neighbors and the stranger, you have deposited, with your own hands, in yonder silent abodes.—The day is at hand, when you are to be gathered to them. Ten thousand messengers stand thick around to hurry us to the tomb.

"Death rides on every passing breeze,
And lurks in every flower."

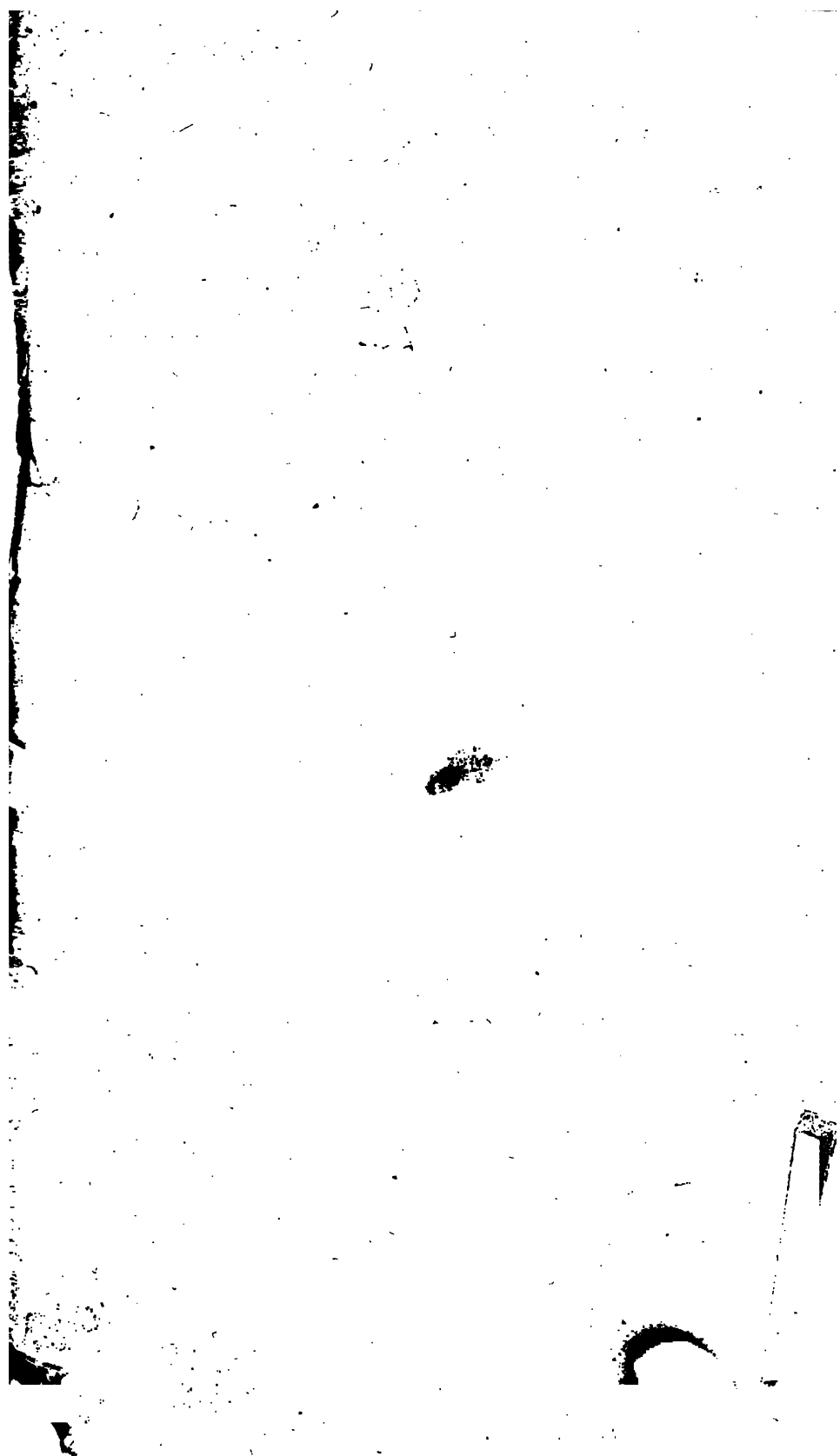
- We know not the day, nor hour of our departure. Any moment, as it flies, may bear on its wings the fatal dart. Resistance is vain. At its touch, beauty fades, and the stateliness of man is brought low. Is not this a time, respected friends, for reflection—for repentance—for reformation unto salvation.

Finally—With what notes of solemn admonition hath the Most High spoken to *this dying assembly*! The great head of

the Church hath called his faithful servant to himself. His work is done. His lips are closed. His voice will be heard no more in this sanctuary, warning the wicked of his way, or inviting 'the weary to rest. That venerable' form you will see no more, till the grave is made alive, by the voice of the archangel—the sea gives up her dead,—the son of man is on his throne,—and the judgment is set. You will then behold him again. And then, the records of eternity will tell, to whom his ministry proved a savor of life unto life, and to whom, of death unto death. That day is at hand. Its solemn and irrevocable decisions will soon be past. The present, therefore, is the only time, in which, to awake and prepare. This day of mercy is passing. It will soon be gone, and with it the 'redemption of the soul that is precious.'

Awake, then, dear hearers, to these high concernments of eternity. Bring your hopes to the ordeal of divine truth. Scrutinize them by the Bible. Inquire for their dates. Examine their foundation. Be faithful. Be honest with your precious souls. Let the voice of truth, of conscience, of God, be heard. Waste not the present moments, in dreams of future preparation. You cannot look death into the distance, at which you may have placed the commencement of a religious life. Venture not yourselves in the conflict with the King of terrors, without the love and hope and faith of the Christian. By the joys of forgiveness,—by the hopes, the victory and the reward of the believer,—and by the blood of expiation, to which he owes all, be entreated to live the life, and die the death of the righteous.









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